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JANN HAWORTH

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© Sidney Janis Gallery, New York 1971

Jann Haworth

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A NOTE ON THE WORK*

There are figures by Jann Haworth that look so real that one's suspicions are immediately aroused . . . The effigial intensity of these sculptures in the round is eery. It's as if they are mirror images stranded on our side of reality; the absence of whosoever they resemble has left them in a state of transfixed reflection. Their alienation can give one the same sensation of falling as when wakened in the night by footfalls on the stairs . . .

Jann's three-dimensional magic realism arises from the combination of an uncanny approach to sculptural representation and a determination bordering on hysteria to stretch the discipline of sewing to inordinate lengths. She is not necessarily dependent on representational forms . . .

When she re-examines the legendary, faerie, fictional, incredible creatures that crowded her childhood she does not become nostalgic. She brings force and a kind of physiological imagination to bear on her fairies and midgets . . . Not long ago, I arrived too early for a Private View in a London Gallery where a family group of her Mermaids was on exhibition. I caught sight of them through the open door, and although their iridescent tails were plainly to be seen, I said to myself 'Oh good, I'm not the first in'. It's the sort of thing Alice might have said when she spied the White Rabbit ahead of her in the long passage . . .

Snake Lady represents a fully frontal approach to the Terroristic Sublime, and is a reminder that The Romantic Agony, which used to be applauded as a devastating criticism of Symbolism and the

*Excerpts

Decadence, has been given a new lease of life as an anthology of fascinating quotations from Symbolist and Decadent writers. The face of *Snake Lady* is the most convincing image of the Medusa's death-dealing glare since the Wolfers pendant, and the reptilian complexity of the total image makes one go very still. The serpents in hair and girdle follow tradition but her head is disclosed within the gaping jaws of another. Drapery hides the rest of her from sight, and one cannot tell whether she is a hybrid or a beautiful patroness of snakes. She is provocative enough to be a challenge to male heroism, and one tends to envy Poseidon the fearless love that enabled him to get her with child before she was slain by Perseus.

The yellow-eyed *Sorceress* comes to us from a Germanic world of impenetrable forests and inaccesible castles, and her magic cloak looks so treacherously magnificent, so potent and so deeply involved in the invocation and employment of evil spirits that a real woman might well hesitate to try it on. Another account of goety, in which three witches are on an airborne trip to a coven, is brilliantly combined with the traditional theme of the three ages of woman to express the differences in their expectations. The oldest of the three is as inflexibly set in evil ways as the crones in Goya's caprichos; she is the absolute opposite of the effigy of an old lady sewing one of Jann's resplendent quilts. This is a work which recaptures the sense of a child's visit to a beloved grandmother; at the same time, one senses that the sculptor is visualizing how she herself would like to be in her far-off old age, and one cannot doubt that when the time comes she will be no less serenely engaged in her sewing, for as Oldenburg says and Jann persistently demonstrates, sewing is connection.

—ROBERT MELVILLE

London, 1971

JANN HAWORTH working on **Alice Box** . 1971

21 Snake Lady 1969-71

Detail: **Sorceress** 1970-71

25 **Titania** 1970

Detail: **Liberty's Doll Collection; Kropotkin; Mer Baby; Snow Baby; Ring Master; Stewart Little** 1969-71

29 **Butterfly Bride** 1970-71

Alice Box (Interior) 1971 **33**

31 Detail: **Old Lady 1971** 1971

CATALOGUE

1 **Old Lady 1962** 1962 Mixed media Life size

2 **Bracelet** 1964 Calico cloth 120" long
Collection: Fritz Becht, Holland

3 **L. A. Times Bedspread** 1964 Cloth 78 x 100"
Collection: E. J. Power, England

4 **Biscuit** 1964 Mixed media 12 x 15"

5 **Mae West** 1965 Mixed media 28¼ x 22½ x 25"
Collection: Sandy Wilson, England

6 **Rainbow Cloak** 1966 Cloth Size 10

7 **Mermaid Gown** 1966 Cloth Size 10

8 **China Cabinet** 1966 Mixed media 36 x 15 x 15"

9 **Lucifer** 1966-67 Mixed media ½ life size

10 **Lindner Dolly in Steinberg Clothes** 1967 Mixed media 60 x 42"
Collection: Robert Melville, England

11 **Black Witch** 1967 Mixed media ½ life size

12 **Betjeman Bears** 1967 Mixed media 36" high

13 **Severini** 1967 Mixed media 24 x 18"

14 **Beads** 1967 Silkscreen on plastic 14" long

15 **Mermaid** 1968 Mixed media Life size

16 **White Witch** 1968 Mixed media ½ life size

17 **Two Mer Babies and Dolls** 1968-70 Mixed media Life size

18 **Younger Mer Baby** 1968-71 Mixed media Life size

19 **Three Witches on Broom** 1969-70 Mixed media ½ life size

20 * **Liberty's Doll Collection: Kropotkin; Mer Baby; Snow Baby; Ring Master; Stewart Little** 1969-71 Mixed media Variable dimensions

21 * **Snake Lady** 1969-71 Mixed media 84" high

22 **W. Heath Robinson** 1969-71 Mixed media 15" high

23 **Red Queen** 1970 Mixed media Life size

24 **Catch** 1970 Mixed media Life size

25 * **Titania** 1970 Mixed media 15 x 9 x 6"

26 **Changling** 1970 Mixed media 15 x 9 x 6"

27 * **Sorceress** 1970-71 Mixed media 74" high

28 **Alexander's Talking Tree** 1970-71 Mixed media 60" high

29 * **Butterfly Bride** 1970-71 Mixed media 18 x 22 x 13"

30 **Midgets: Miss Roselle; Introducing Mr. Buttons and Miss Stripes Twin Midget Male and Female Impersonators** 1971 Mixed media 30" high each

31 * **Old Lady 1971** 1971 Mixed media Life size

32 **Morning, Noon and Night: Cloak** 1971 Cloth Size 12

33 * **Alice Box** 1971 Mixed media 35 x 35 x 30"

34 **Shell Babies** 1971 Mixed media 24 x 24 x 7"

35 **Bead** 1967 Cryla drawing 8 x 10"

36-40 **Paper Doll Drawings** 1967 Cryla drawings 15 x 10" each

* *Reproduced*

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NEW
SCULPTURE
BY
JANN HAWORTH
OPENING
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DECEMBER 2, 1971
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